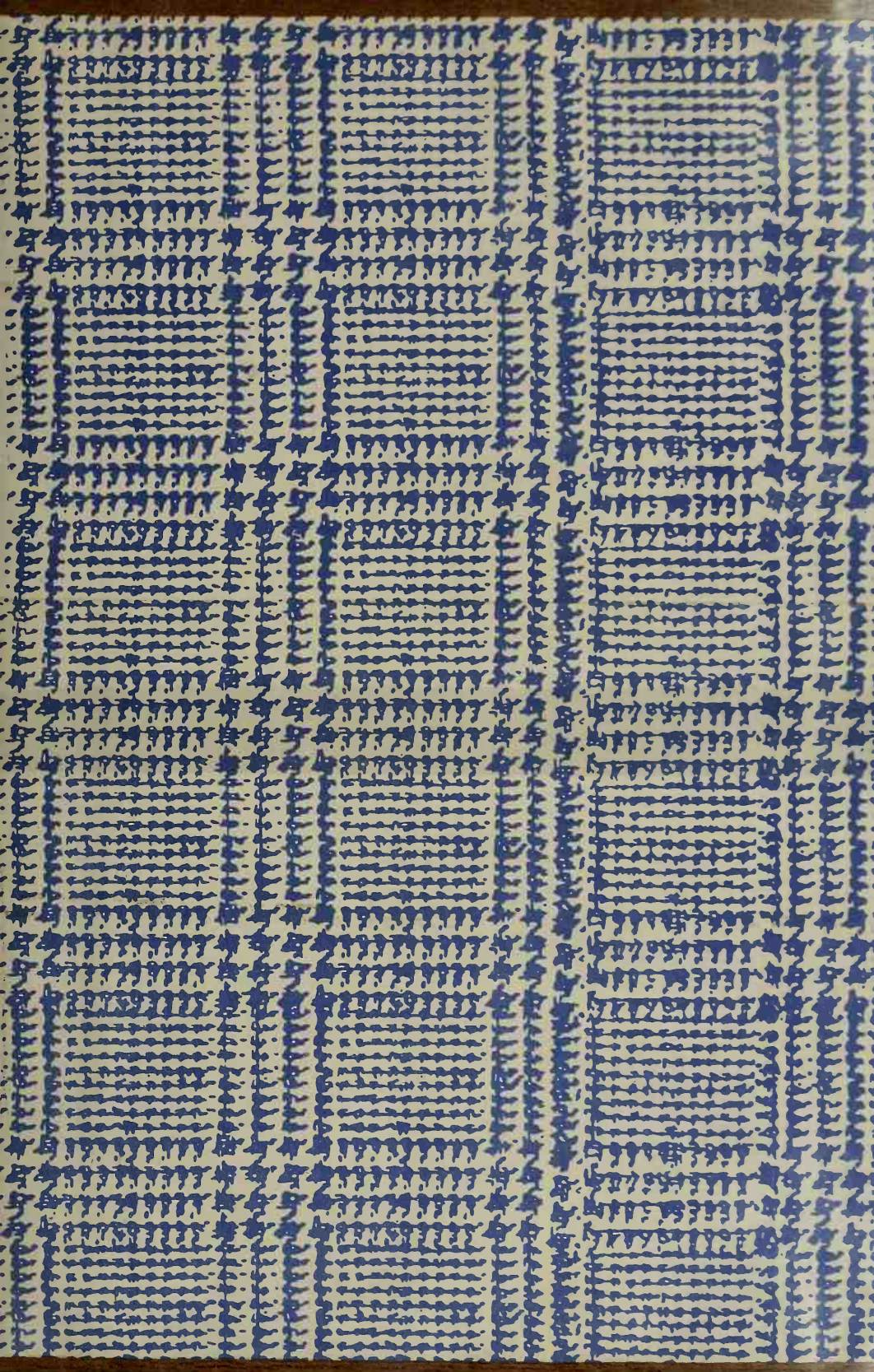
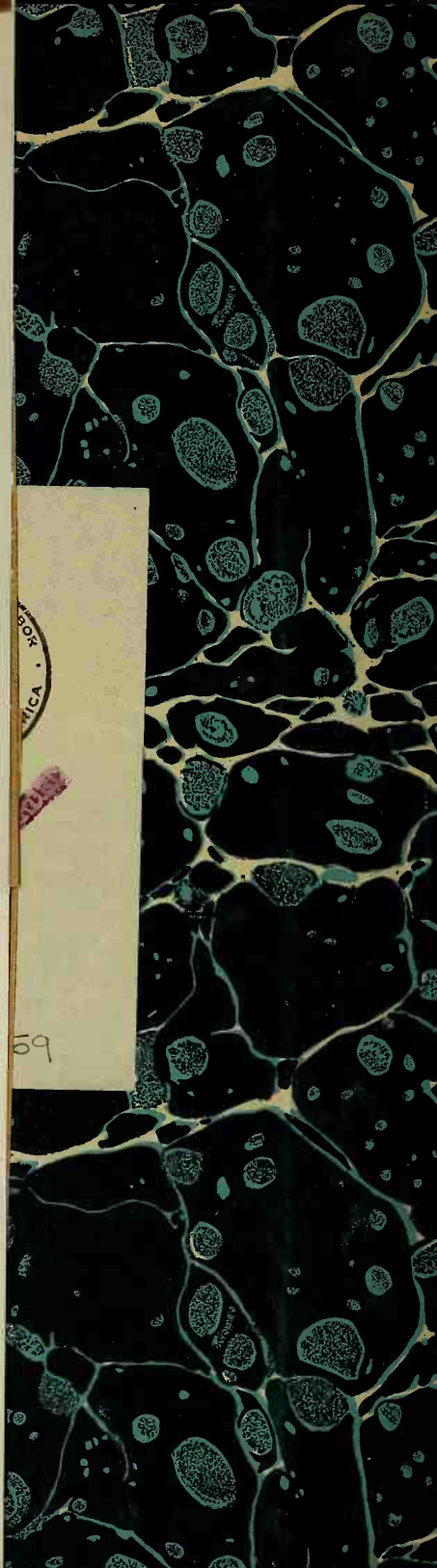
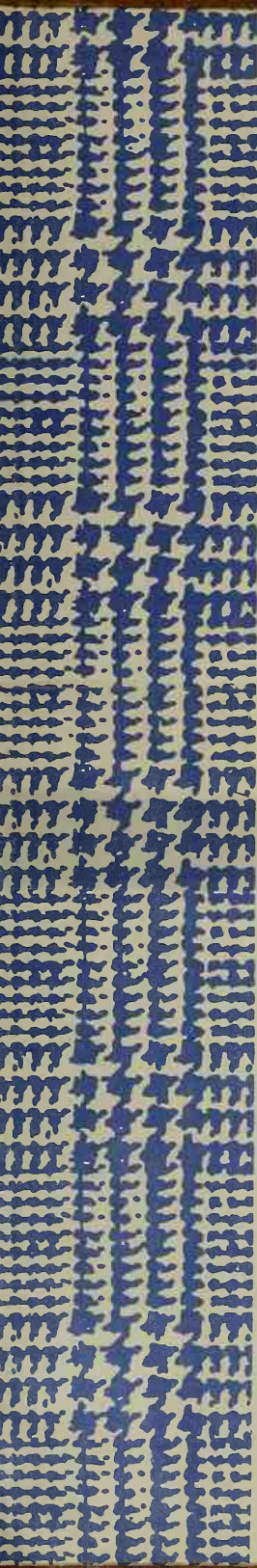






LIBRARY
MICA

1959

59

Print

050

N

National Committee for Prevention of
Blindness

News letter: 33-59: 1921-1926.

Print

050

N

National Committee for Prevention
of Blindness

News letter: 33-59: 1921-1926.

PROPERTY OF
IOWA STATE COMMISSION
FOR THE BLIND



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
National Federation of the Blind (NFB)

<http://archive.org/details/newsletter54nati>

THE NEWS LETTER

4
Published five times a year, in February, April, June, October, and December, by the NATIONAL COMMITTEE *for the* PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS, INC., at 130 East Twenty-second Street, New York, N. Y.

NUMBER 54

NEW YORK, N. Y.

DECEMBER, 1925

CONFERENCE NUMBER, 1925

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30

INSTITUTE FOR VOLUNTEER WORKERS

The Eleventh Annual Conference of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness was inaugurated on Monday, November 30, at 10 A. M., with an institute for volunteer workers, of which Miss Eleanor P. Brown, secretary of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, was chairman. Mr. Lewis H. Carris, managing director, in a few preliminary remarks, stressed the desirability of maintaining informality in this institute.

Miss Evelyn Davis, secretary of the Association of Volunteers in Social Service, discussed the question of how volunteer workers can most effectively serve professional organizations. She indicated that the volunteer can bring a broadening influence to her work, and further, she can educate the public through her personal associations. On the other hand, she pointed out, the social agency can get the best service from volunteers by studying the organization and finding out what there is for volunteers to do and what they can best do, and by providing special training for volunteers. Her final point was that, to make the best use of volunteer service, it would behoove the social agency to follow up what the volunteer is doing, what she is getting out of it, and what she is contributing.

Miss Clarissa Townsend, of the Social Service Department of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, discussed the field for volunteer service in conserving sight. She also emphasized the field for volunteer workers in carrying the message of eye conservation among their associates and to the various women's clubs and parent teacher associations.

In the discussion which followed Miss Ruth Butler, who had been doing very satisfactory volunteer work at the Preschool Eye

Clinic at Hartley House, emphasized the necessity of making the volunteer worker feel that she is actually doing something constructive.

Miss Estella Lawes, Director of the Department of Sight Saving Classes, Cincinnati, pointed out that, after all, teachers are volunteers and it would be a great help to them as such if they get instruction from proper agencies as to how best to conserve sight. Mr. Carris, in discussing the line to be drawn between professional and volunteer service, stated that volunteer service should be considered that service which would be worthy of pay if funds were available. Dr. B. Franklin Royer, medical director of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, stated that as a former health department officer, he could vouch for the necessity for volunteer service, especially in selling the idea of eye conservation and conservation of vision classes to the public. The question of definite training courses for conservation of vision volunteers was suggested by Miss Alice A. Burdge, Department of Sight Saving Classes, Cincinnati.

Following this discussion, a demonstration talk dealing with the different phases of the work of preventing blindness and conserving vision was given by Miss Julia Fulton, assistant secretary of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness. In her talk, which was called "The Eyes of Youth," Miss Fulton used the Brayco machine, pointing out with illustrations the common causes of blindness or defective vision.

Dr. Walter Baer Weidler, assistant surgeon and assistant pathologist of the Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital, presided over the afternoon session, at which Miss Ruth Hill, field secretary, American Association for Organizing Family Social Work, discussed the question of the National Committee's cooperation with social agencies doing case work. Dr. H. Robertson Skeel, ophthalmologist of the Demonstration Eye Clinic, New York City, indicated the progress accomplished in the clinic for children of preschool age. The Demonstration Eye Clinic for preschool children was opened at Hartley House, 413 West 46th Street, New York City, under the joint auspices of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness and the Clinton Neighborhood Conference, which is composed of forty odd social agencies active in the middle west section of Manhattan. Miss Mary Scott, supervisor of the West Side Henry Street Settlement Activities, pointed out that

the provision of eye examinations for children of preschool age in the various neighborhood organizations is both practicable and advisable, not only as a means of correcting defects at the earliest possible moment, but of educating the parents and families in eyesight conservation.

EYE HAZARDS OF INDUSTRIAL OCCUPATIONS

SYMPOSIUM ON EYE HAZARDS IN INDUSTRIAL OCCUPATIONS.

JOINT MEETING OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF SAFETY AND THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

On the same afternoon, a special symposium on Eye Hazards in Industrial Occupations was held jointly with the American Museum of Safety. Among the speakers at this meeting were: Mr. Arthur Williams of the New York Edison Company, and president of the American Museum of Safety, who presided; Mr. Charles P. Tolman of the National Safety Council; Mr. Harry Guilbert of the Pullman Company; Mr. Walter King of the American Optical Company; Mr. Preston A. Millar of the Electrical Testing Laboratories; Dr. A. J. Lanza of the National Health Council; and Mr. Carris. The advance of the safety movement because of the growing recognition on the part of the employer as well as the employee of the necessity for installing and using safety devices was the theme under discussion. Pointing out that it cost an employer \$3,300 every time a workman loses an eye in New York State, Mr. Guilbert, in his discussion, stated that this amount would provide protective goggles for 3,300 men. Mr. Millar indicated the improvement in efficiency and the decrease in eyestrain under properly lighted working surroundings. The meeting was well attended both by social and by industrial groups, and the spirit of the meeting was indicative of the increasing cooperation between industrial and health agencies.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS PROGRAM OF COMMISSIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Tuesday, December 1, under the chairmanship of Mr. Carris, was devoted to the prevention of blindness programs of the state commissions and associations for the blind. Mr. H. R. Latimer, executive secretary of the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, in his discussion, "How the National Committee for the Preven-

tion of Blindness Can Be of Service to State and Local Organizations in Conducting Educational Campaigns for the Preservation of Sight," suggested the possibility of educating local organizations through correspondence, through propaganda, and perhaps even through conducting some formal course in the fundamental principles in conserving vision.

Mrs. Anna F. Harris, secretary of the Missouri Commission for the Blind and the Missouri Association for the Blind, in the course of her discussion on the cooperation of the National Committee in doing research work and providing literature, displayed the splendid statistics which have been collected by the Missouri Commission for the Blind. She pointed out how essential it is for State Commissions for the Blind to keep accurate records as to causes of blindness, age when blinded, and other pertinent information, for it is only after determining such causes that blindness can be prevented.

The meeting continued into the afternoon with a discussion on how the National Committee can cooperate in securing new legislation and improvements in existing legislation. It was expected that Mrs. J. F. Lumb, executive secretary of the Ohio State Commission for the Blind, would lead in this discussion; however, since she was unavoidably absent, Mr. Carris vouched for the willingness of the National Committee to study at the request of any State Commission for the Blind the legislative problem in that state, and recommend adequate legislation. Miss Lydia Y. Hayes, secretary of the New Jersey State Commission for the Blind, dealing with the question of what constitutes prevention of blindness in state and local organizations for the blind having no special department for this work, traced the development of her organization, its influence in securing legislation and in educating the public. Pursuing the question of prevention further, Dr. B. Franklin Royer, medical director of the National Committee, stressed the advisability and necessity of cooperation between official agencies, such as the departments of health, and the volunteer agencies. The cooperative relationship of the National Committee with the State and Provincial Health Authorities was indicated by Dr. Royer as a splendid example of the possibilities of such relationship.

SIGHT SAVING CLASSES

SPECIAL MEETING AND DEMONSTRATION ARRANGED BY THE COURTESY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SIGHT SAVING CLASSES, BOARD OF EDUCATION, CITY OF NEW YORK.*

The late afternoon was devoted to a special meeting and demonstration of sight saving classes arranged by the courtesy of the Department of Sight Saving Classes, Board of Education of the City of New York, Miss Margaret J. McCooley, associate superintendent of schools, presiding. Dr. Jules L. Blumenthal, director of Bureau of Child Hygiene, New York City Department of Health, spoke upon sight conservation work of the Bureau of Child Hygiene and the great importance of cooperation with the Board of Education and other agencies. Pointing out the increasing accomplishments of the Bureau of Child Hygiene, he gave as an example the remarkable reduction in the incidence of trachoma among the school children in New York City. Fifteen years ago there were over 200,000 cases of trachoma in the public schools, while today there are less than 300 cases, although the school population has increased. Progress along other lines in sight conservation was similarly indicated by Dr. Blumenthal.

Miss Gertrude J. Helbling, sight conservation teacher of Public School No. 71, New York City, gave a demonstration of a primary reading lesson in a sight saving class. She did this with the cooperation of five of her pupils who were called upon to read according to her method. The use of large type books and of properly selected illustrations in sight saving work was demonstrated. Other discussions at this special meeting were: "Sight Conservation from the Viewpoint of the Elementary School Principal," by Dr. Nathan Peyser, principal of Public School No. 181, Brooklyn, New York; "Use of Pictures in Sight Conservation Classes," by Miss Camilla M. Clark, sight conservation teacher, Public School No. 54, Brooklyn, New York; "Social Adjustment of the Partially Sighted," by Miss Grace F. Caldwell, visiting teacher for sight saving classes; "Scientific Classification of Sight Conservation Pupils," by Miss Elizabeth E. Farrell, inspector of ungraded classes. The meeting was especially well attended by school teachers and health workers.

* A full account of the conferences on sight saving classes is given in the December issue of the Sight Saving Class Exchange, copies of which may be obtained on request.

At six-thirty o'clock a dinner was given for the Special Committee on Research Problems in the Prevention of Blindness under the leadership of Conrad Berens, Jr., M.D., and at the same hour, a dinner for those directly interested in sight saving class problems.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST TRACHOMA AMONG THE INDIANS

A JOINT MEETING OF THE EASTERN ASSOCIATION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS AND THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

The campaign against trachoma among the Indians was the problem under discussion on Wednesday, December 2, at the joint meeting of the Eastern Association on Indian Affairs and the National Committee, at which Dr. A. J. Lanza, National Health Council, presided. Dr. Herbert J. Spinden, Peabody Museum of Harvard University, speaking on trachoma among the Indians as a social and economic menace, pointed out that today is the age of domestication of power, and that we are fighting a defensive war against parasites. The United States stands in a position to "set the pace" for the world in preventive medicine. Trachoma among the Indians is an economic factor when we consider that it leads to blindness, and blindness renders the individual 100 per cent visually deficient. Discussing the matter further, Dr. Spinden stated that desert people are peculiarly affected by trachoma. Unfortunately it usually occurs where medical attention is not very available, among poor or ignorant people. Its prevalence among the Indians may be judged by the fact that of 300,000 examined, 29,000 had trachoma. Some individual villages show a higher percentage. He ventured the opinion that trachoma is really a white man's disease which was passed on to the Indians and the incidence among them has grown so rapidly that it now comes back as a menace to the white man. Dr. Spinden in his closing remarks emphasized the necessity of establishing a real cooperation among all agencies interested in the work of the Indian and in public health.

Mr. Carris, in discussing some facts and plans of combat, added to the statistics mentioned by Dr. Spinden. The latest statistics, he pointed out, show that there is a variation of from 2 per cent in Michigan to 49 per cent in Colorado. The total percentages show that of 308,774 Indians examined, 29,094 or 10 per cent of the Indians have trachoma.

Hon. Charles H. Burke, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in his paper, "What the Indian Bureau Has Accomplished," indicated that the Bureau was anxious to promote the reduction of trachoma from the economic, industrial, educational and health points of view. It was constantly aiming to make the Indian an asset, self supporting, and for this he must have health. Mr. Burke stated further that health work among the Indians is comparatively new since in 1880 there was only one hospital for Indians. The number has grown so that in 1905 there were five and at the present time there are 82 hospitals, 186 physicians, 124 nurses and 38 field matrons, and the appropriations for health have grown from \$12,000 a year to \$700,000. In discussing the responsibility of the Indian Bureau, Mr. Burke made the point that trachoma is not only a federal problem, but a state problem, and the states have the greatest opportunity to cooperate since more than one-half of the Indian children are in public schools. That, since the Indian will eventually become the ward of the state in which he resides, it is of increasing importance for the state and federal and volunteer agencies to cooperate in every way possible.

The question of whether trachoma can be eliminated was discussed by various public health officials and ophthalmologists. Dr. Taliaffero Clark, who has long been associated with the United States Public Health Service, indicated the success of the Anti-trachoma Campaign in Kentucky. He gave some of his experiences after having visited reservations in 24 states, stating that he found that the average incidence among the Indians is about 22 per cent. An interesting point he made was that a great many Indian medicine men themselves are blind from trachoma.

Dr. Webster Fox, who has done some notable work among the Blackfoot Indians, discussed the application of the newer methods of treatment and the remarkable results which can be expected. His experiences also indicated that there is a danger of spreading trachoma through the growing interrelationship between the Indians and the white people.

Miss Isobel Janowich, Research Secretary of the National Committee, reported on the observations of Dr. S. J. Crumbine on training Indian girls for tribal nursing service. She cited the work accomplished in Minnesota among the Chippewa Indians through the allotment of \$3,000 by the American Child Health Association. She stated that at the present time two Chippewa Indian nurses

are working under the Division of Child Hygiene in Minnesota and that Indian mothers and older girls are being taught in classes and in their homes how to feed and care for babies and children.

Miss Margaret McKittrick, Chairman of the New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs, and Mrs. Joseph Lindon Smith, Director, Eastern Association of Indian Affairs, and various other representatives gave their personal observations among the Indians in New Mexico. The consensus of opinion was that the field for constructive work in the eradication of trachoma among the Indians needs the best efforts of all the state, federal and volunteer agencies.

The National Committee arranged and conducted on the same afternoon a visit to the Eye Clinic for Preschool Children, 413 West 46th Street, where those interested could see the practical application of sight conservation.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3

GENERAL VISITING DAY

Thursday morning was general visiting day. A group of supervisors and others interested attended the eye clinic held at public school No. 30. Dr. Morell Beals who is director of the ten eye clinics of the city, demonstrated the treatment given and laid special emphasis on the function of the clinic in caring for children in sight saving classes.

Two sight saving classes were visited—one showing the work of the upper elementary grades and the junior high school and the other the work of the lower primary grades. In both classes demonstration lessons were given.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

The Annual Meeting of the National Committee took place Thursday afternoon, December 3d, Dr. Park Lewis, the Vice-president, presiding. After a brief introduction by the Chairman, Mr. Carris indicated the aims of the National Committee and what it was accomplishing by way of research and cooperative effort with boards of education and boards of health.

Dr. William H. Wilmer, Director of the William Holland Wilmer Foundation, Johns Hopkins University, who was the speaker of the meeting, discussed eyesight conservation in general. He cited the

reduction of 50 per cent in the frequency of babies' sore eyes, and reductions in industrial eye accidents amounting to 90 per cent in some plants. Dr. Wilmer, after explaining a series of slides indicating various microscopic studies, exhibited specimens of crude goggles and eyeshades showing evidence that protective devices for the eyes have been used for many years. He declared that there is evidence that 134 years before Christ the Chinese understood modern principles of eye protection in their use of colored glasses and fine mesh horsehair screens to protect their eyes.

At the close of Dr. Wilmer's address, the following resolution proposed by Mrs. Aida de Acosta Root was passed by the members of the National Committee:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Recent studies of health conditions among our 300,000 American Indian wards disclose an appalling prevalence of trachoma with its inevitable damage of vision and ultimate sequelæ of blindness, and,

WHEREAS, Reports recently made public by governmental agencies charged with guardianship of these 300,000 Indian wards, confirmed also by many sincere friends of the American Indians, show that provisions are now made for a totally inadequate staff of highly trained persons to cope with the ravages of trachoma in the 30,000 cases reported by the Indian Agents, and,

WHEREAS, The Secretary of the Interior and Commissioner of Indian Affairs are greatly handicapped in their sincere efforts in behalf of the health and welfare of these 30,000 afflicted Indians, both by shortage of skilled personnel and shortage of funds,

Therefore, Be it Resolved, That the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness in annual meeting assembled, and representing upward of 15,000 persons, who by annual contributions in memberships or by donations, support every hopeful effort in lessening blindness, respectfully urge upon The Congress such increased financial support and additional legislation as may be required to more quickly alleviate the suffering and ravages of trachoma and minimize its incidence and to better cooperate with all social agencies in a position to help with this promising work so well begun by the Secretary of the Interior and his Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

The nominating committee presented the following names for the Board of Directors for the term 1925-1928:

Mr. George Blagden
Dr. Colman W. Cutler
Mr. Cleveland H. Dodge
Miss Martha Lincoln Draper
Mr. John M. Glenn
Dr. F. Park Lewis
Mr. Ira A. Place
Dr. William Campbell Posey
Miss Louisa Lee Schuyler
Mr. Edward M. Van Cleve

The report was unanimously approved by the members.

Dr. William F. Snow, Director of the American Social Hygiene Association, was elected by the Board of Directors to fill the vacancy in the class expiring in 1927. Mrs. William B. Rice, member of the Board of Directors, of the class of 1927 was elected to the position of Honorary Vice-president and Dr. William Holland Wilmer, Director of the Wilmer Foundation, was transferred from the Advisory Council to fill this vacancy on the Board.

ANNUAL DINNER

Thursday evening, December 3, visiting delegates to the Conference attended the Board of Directors' dinner at the City Club, over which Dr. Park Lewis presided.

At this time, Dr. Wilmer supplemented his address of the afternoon with a brief account of the Wilmer Institute's aspirations. He stressed the value of team work, as evidenced by accomplishments in the Institute which could not have been reached without the co-operative spirit of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, and expressed the hope that close cooperation might exist between the Wilmer Institute and the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness.

Mr. John M. Glenn, General Director of the Russell Sage Foundation, called the attention of those present to the remarkable work done by Mrs. Aida de Acosta Root and Dr. William H. Welch in securing the initial \$3,000,000 for the Wilmer Foundation. In outlining the progress of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, he expressed appreciation of Mr. Van Cleve's pioneer work and perseverance in building the firm foundation on which the Committee stands.

Dr. William F. Snow of the American Social Hygiene Society spoke of international efforts to provide prophylactic treatment for sailors in order to eliminate in so far as possible this floating source of infection.

On motion the National Committee's approval was expressed of legislation for the prevention of hereditary blindness as proposed by Dr. Lucien Howe of Buffalo.

The need of more widespread knowledge of the Committee's work among the medical profession and particularly in ophthalmological circles, was emphasized by Dr. Joseph O'Gorman, School Ophthalmologist of Buffalo.

Mr. H. R. Latimer, Director of the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, expressed his wish that a different psychology towards the blind might be instilled into the minds of sighted persons, and into the minds of the blind themselves. "We should look on ourselves not as handicapped, but as enriched by whatever fine qualities have come to us through our forebears. Let us build on what we have and strive, not only for the prevention of blindness, but for the prevention of all matters of limitation."

Dr. John A. Ferrell, of the Rockefeller Foundation, Dr. A. J. Lanza, Director of the National Health Council, Mr. Robert B. Irwin, Research Director of the American Foundation for the Blind, and Dr. Conrad Berens were others who contributed to the discussions and expressed their interest in the Committee's activities.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4

Friday morning was devoted to the discussion of "How the National Committee may be of greatest service to Sight Saving Classes." Miss Estella Lawes, Director of Sight Conservation, Cincinnati, presented the subject from the aspect of training of teachers. She brought out the obligations of the Committee to establish and maintain courses for teacher training.

Dr. Gladys G. Ide, Director of Special Education in Philadelphia, spoke on the obligations of the Committee for making available intensive courses for the professional improvement of teachers already in the service.

Miss Ida E. Ridgeway, Supervisor of Sight Saving Classes in Massachusetts, stressed the responsibility of supervisors and teachers of these classes in making it possible for the Committee to act as a clearing house.

Mrs. Hazel C. Hadley, Director of Special Classes in the State of Ohio, laid upon the Committee very definite obligations for assisting the state supervisor.

Miss Stella V. Stillson, Director of Special Education in the State of Wisconsin, presented the viewpoint of the local supervisor.

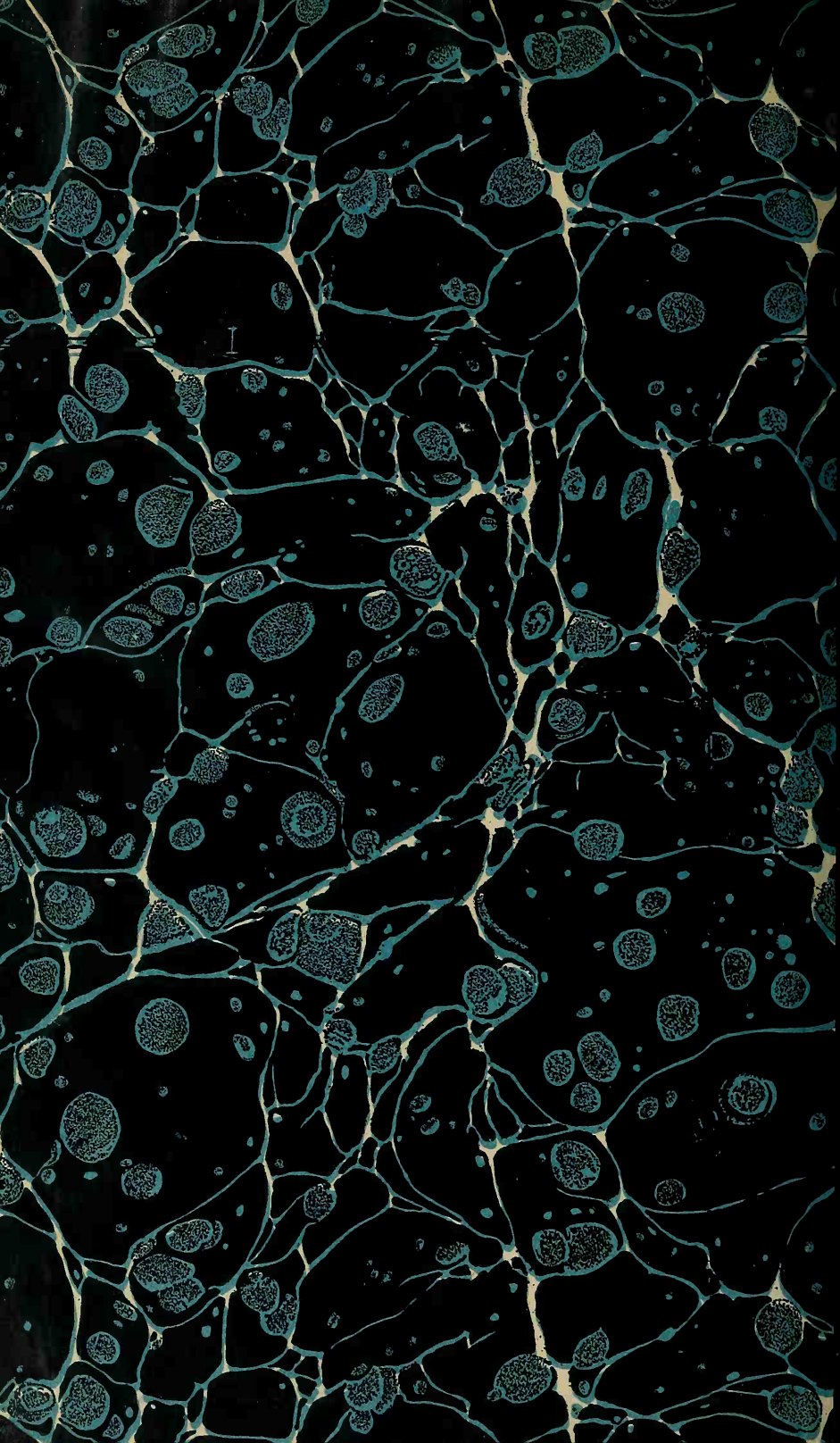
The afternoon session was devoted to round table discussions of the ophthalmological and legislative aspects of sight saving classes. Dr. Emily A. Pratt, Specialist for Eyes and Ears, Medical Inspection Bureau, University of the State of New York, gave a general outline of a survey in Jamestown, New York, in which the eyes of 8,000 school children were examined under standard conditions. She stated that this survey brought home to ophthalmologists of the community not only their own responsibility in sorting out children who are candidates for sight saving classes but the important part undertaken by the teacher in making possible the education of such children. "Ophthalmologists must broaden their field so that they will learn from the teacher as she learns from them. Their language must be presented in a form that can be understood by the layman in such a way that it will be of use to him."

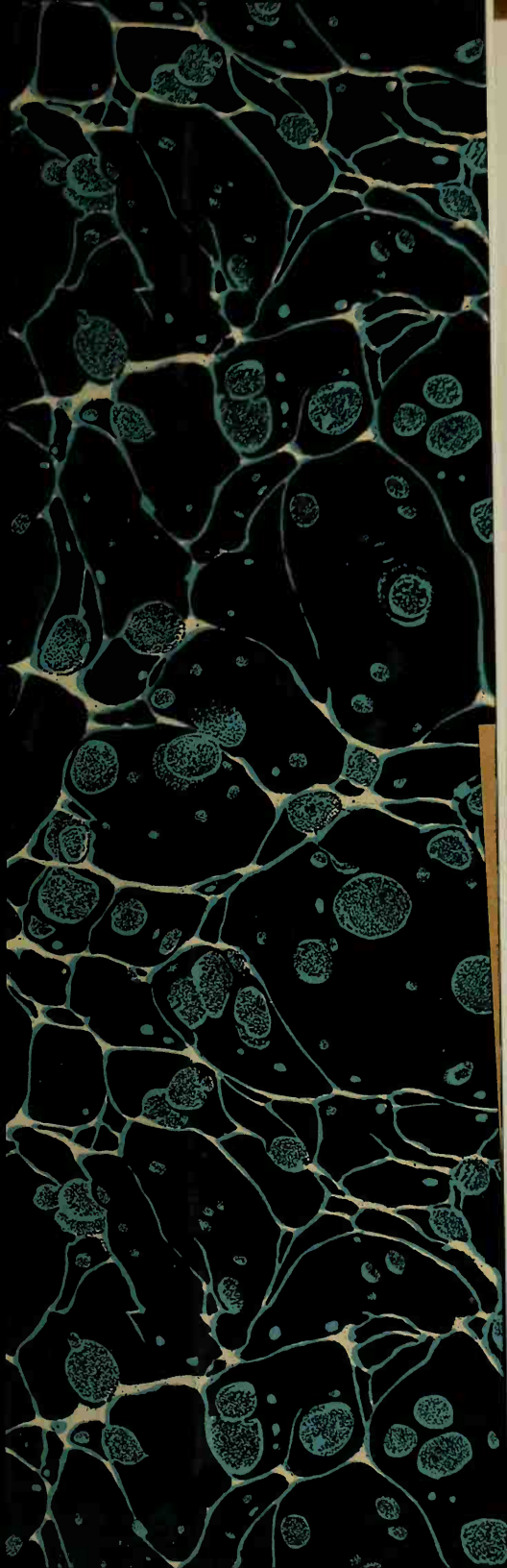
Miss Alice Burdge, Supervisor of Sight Saving Classes in a number of cities in southern Ohio, suggested that the best way to obtain the interests of ophthalmologists not directly connected with sight saving classes is the personal touch—that personality, tact and a knowledge of professional etiquette are essential—that once the interest is gained, it may be held by both sides giving real help.

Mr. Lewis H. Carris, Managing Director of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, spoke of two kinds of legislation: The regulatory or police type and that broader type which promotes something which is of good to the citizens. He emphasized the fact that the latter should be applied to sight saving classes, making a partnership between the state and the community in which each would bear its share of the burden.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5

The Annual Conference of the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness ended on Saturday morning, December 5th, when the members of the conference met at the Lighting Institute of the Edison Electrical Laboratories, Harrison, N. J. A very fine program had been arranged by the Institute consisting of a series of demonstrations of various types of lighting including model lighting for the home, school, store and factory. A variety of experiments had been arranged to show the effect of light on speed, accuracy, safety, comfort, etc. Harmony and beauty in lighting were demonstrated to be quite compatible with adequate illumination.





BRO-DART Newark • Los Angeles • Brantford, Ont. Cat. No. 55 101 Book Jacket Cover Insert Printed in U.S.A.





112056